



# Shakespeare For White Trash: Romeo and Juliet

*Classic literature translated into Modern English by Crad Kilodney*

## **October 7, 2010 – Author’s Note:**

“Shakespeare For White Trash” is a series of condensed rewrites designed to make Shakespeare understandable and enjoyable to those who have little or no knowledge of him. The plots and characters are unchanged, but everything else has been radically restyled. Read my versions and you’ll be a Shakespeare fan forever!

*These plays are intended to be performed, as well as read.*

## **Main characters**

Montague — a noble of Verona

Lady Montague — his wife

Romeo — son of Montague

Benvolio — kinsman and friend of Romeo

Mercutio — kinsman of Prince Escalus and friend of Romeo

Balthasar — Romeo’s servant

Abraham — Montague’s servant

Capulet — a noble of Verona

Lady Capulet — his wife

Juliet — daughter of Capulet

Nurse to Juliet

Tybalt — Juliet’s cousin

Sampson and Gregory — servants to Capulet

Peter — servant to Juliet's Nurse

Escalus — Prince of Verona

Paris — cousin of Prince Escalus

Page to Paris

Friar Laurence

Friar John

Chemist (referred to in the original as Apothecary)

**Gist of the story:** Romeo and Juliet fall in love, but because their families have been feuding as long as anyone can remember, they can't marry openly. So, with the help of the sympathetic Friar Laurence, they wed secretly. Only hours later, Romeo is confronted by Juliet's hot-tempered cousin Tybalt, who wants to punish Romeo for sneaking into a party at the Capulets' house. Romeo is unwilling to fight someone he is now related to by marriage, but Mercutio eagerly accepts Tybalt's challenge. Tybalt kills Mercutio. Then Romeo kills Tybalt. Romeo is now in big trouble because the Prince issued a death decree to stop further fighting in public between the warring Montagues and Capulets. Romeo has time for one last visit to Juliet to consummate their marriage, and then he must flee to Mantua, where he has been banished. Then things get really complicated. Capulet arranges a marriage for Juliet with Paris. She wants to avoid it but doesn't tell her father she's already married. Friar Laurence comes up with a bizarre plan to help Juliet avoid the arranged marriage. He gives her a potion that will simulate death for 42 hours. Once she's interred in the family crypt, he will send word to Romeo explaining what's happened and instructing him to come to the cemetery and take Juliet away as soon as she wakes up. The plan goes horribly wrong, however. Romeo never gets Friar Laurence's letter. Instead, he gets a false report that Juliet has died. He returns to her tomb and, finding her apparently dead, he drinks poison and kills himself. Then Juliet awakens and, finding her beloved Romeo dead beside her, she takes his dagger and stabs herself in suicide. The feuding families arrive to discover the fatal consequences of their feud. (Bear in mind that Romeo and Juliet are just kids, so don't expect them to act like mature adults. Juliet is a few weeks shy of her fourteenth birthday. Romeo is probably about seventeen.)

**Act 1, Scene 1.** *A street in Verona. Sampson and Gregory, two servants of Capulet, come in. They are armed.*

*Sampson:* If any Montagues show up, I'll kick their asses.

*Gregory:* If they don't kick yours first — ha!

*Sampson:* I'll smash their men and grope their women.

*Gregory:* Just grope? Is that all?

*Sampson:* I'll give 'em a fucking they'll never forget. I'll give 'em—

*Gregory:* Hold it. There's two guys from the Montagues.

*(Abraham and Balthasar approach.)*

*Sampson:* You say something to them, and I'll back you up.

*Gregory:* Yeah, sure you will.

*Sampson:* Get them to start a fight, and we'll have the law on our side.

*Gregory:* I could stick my tongue out. How's that?

*Sampson:* I know. I'll give 'em the finger, sort of accidentally. *(He gestures with his middle finger somewhat vaguely.)*

*Abraham:* Hey, was that meant for us?

*Sampson:* I don't know what you're talking about, dude.

*Gregory:* I think he's trying to start something.

*Abraham:* No, I ain't starting nothing.

*Sampson:* Just don't fuck with us, man. Our master is Capulet.

*Abraham:* Oooh, Capulet! You don't say! Well, Montague is better than Capulet any day.

*(Benvolio comes in as the four servants draw their swords.)*

*Sampson:* I'm ready for you guys right now!

*Abraham:* Come on, moron!

*(The servants begin to fight, but Benvolio intervenes and stops them.)*

*Benvolio:* Hey, knock it off, you guys!

*(Tybalt comes in.)*

*Tybalt:* Hey, Benvolio, you fucker, keep away from our guys or I'll chop your head off!

*Benvolio:* I'm just stopping this fight, Tybalt! You should do the same! Unless you want a piece of me!

*Tybalt:* Fuck all you Montagues! I hate you bastards!

*(Tybalt reaches for his sword, but Benvolio attacks him with fists, then they fight. The servants join in. Others from both houses arrive as well, and a noisy brawl of fist-fighting ensues. Then citizens and peace officers arrive with clubs.)*

*An Officer:* Get all these guys! Fuckin' trouble-makers!

*Citizens:* Fuckin' Capulets! Goddamn Montagues!

*(The officers and citizens separate the warring factions. Then Capulet, an old man dressed in his nightclothes, arrives with his wife.)*

*Capulet:* What's going on? Are these Montagues starting a fight? Give me my sword!

*Lady Capulet:* Your sword? Get serious. More like your crutch.

*(Old Montague and his wife come in.)*

*Montague:* Capulet, you bastard! Wait till I get my hands on you!

*Lady Montague (Restraining him):* No, you don't.

*(Prince Escalus arrives with his attendants.)*

*Prince:* Are you fucking assholes making trouble again? I've had it up to here with both of you! Fucking Capulets and fucking Montagues! This is the third time you've gotten into a street brawl, and the whole town is fed up with all of you and your constant feuding! From now on, any one of you who disturbs the peace by fighting will get the death penalty! You, Capulet. You're coming back with me for a little talk. And you, Montague. I want to see you this afternoon.

*(All disperse, except for Montague, Lady Montague, and Benvolio.)*

*Montague:* Who started it this time?

*Benvolio:* Your two guys and their two guys were fighting, and all I did was step in to stop them. Then Tybalt comes along with his big attitude and big mouth, and the next thing I know he's reaching for his sword. And pretty soon everybody from both sides is jumping into it, and it turns into another riot, like last time. Then the Prince shows up.

*Lady Montague:* At least Romeo wasn't involved, thank goodness! Where is he, anyway?

*Benvolio:* I saw him out walking before dawn. He saw me coming and ducked into the woods. I figured if he didn't want to talk to me, I should leave him alone.

*Montague:* I don't know what's wrong with that kid. He's always depressed. All day long he shuts himself up in his room. Nobody can talk to him. He keeps everything to himself.

*Benvolio:* I see him coming. Maybe I can worm something out of him.

*Montague:* You try. *(To Lady Montague)* Let's go.

*(Montague and his wife leave. Then Romeo comes in.)*

*Benvolio:* Hey, cousin, wassup?

*Romeo:* Nothing. Just one miserable hour after another, that's all.

*Benvolio:* I think I know what's eating you. You're in love. That's it, isn't it?

*Romeo:* Ohh...Ben...Seriously, man. I'm like out of my fucking mind. I can't think straight anymore. It's making me sick.

*Benvolio:* Well, that's pretty sad. More like pathetic.

*Romeo:* Thanks. That sure makes me feel better. I'll fuck off, then.

*Benvolio:* Hold on. I'll go with you.

*Romeo:* Go with me where? Into the pit of hell?

*Benvolio:* Come on, pull yourself together. Who are you in love with?

*Romeo:* Rosaline. But it's useless. She doesn't want a boyfriend. She wants to stay a virgin. She's so hot and so beautiful. It's such a fucking waste. I'm just so sick in love with her, but I have like zero chance with her. I feel like a dead man.

*Benvolio:* You're not a dead man. Stop talking like a fool. There are plenty of women out there. Open your eyes and find somebody else.

*Romeo:* I can't. She's the most beautiful woman in the world. There are no other women, as far as I'm concerned.

*Benvolio:* Man, you need some serious therapy or you'll end up totally deranged. I'm going to have to work on you.

(They leave.)

**Act 1, Scene 2. A street. Capulet, Paris, and a Servant come in.**

*Capulet:* The Prince read the Riot Act to me and Montague both. We're supposed to keep everybody else in line.

*Paris:* It's too bad there's been a feud all these years. But what do you say about my proposition — my marrying your daughter?

*Capulet:* The girl isn't even fourteen yet. Give her two more years.

*Paris:* There are married girls her age. In Afghanistan there are eighty-year-old men marrying twelve-year-old girls.

*Capulet:* Never mind what those Mohammedan freaks do. They're a bunch of retarded, sub-cultural monkeys. But, look, I don't mind if you start getting to know the girl. Better you than someone else. In principle, I approve of your proposition. I'm going to work on it. Now, I'm having my annual house party tonight. It's for friends, relatives, and available singles. It's a chance for the singles to look each other over. So you come over and give Juliet a chance to get to know you. We'll have food, wine, dancing. Some people show up in masks. It's cool. (To Servant, giving a paper) Bozo, here's the guest list for the party. I want you to call on all these people and tell them they're invited to our house party tonight.

(*Capulet and Paris leave.*)

*Servant:* Fuck me. I can't read. Oh, wait. These guys can help me out.

*(Benvolio and Romeo come in.)*

*Benvolio:* Find another woman and you'll feel better.

*Romeo:* It's no use. I feel like I'm in a prison, being starved and tortured and—

*Servant:* Excuse me, sir. Can you read?

*Romeo:* Of course, I can read. What do you think I am, a Canadian?

*Servant:* Oh, thank God! I have a list of people here that I'm supposed to invite to my master's house for a party tonight. Unfortunately, I can't read. Could you read me the names? I'm good at remembering.

*Romeo (Taking paper):* Sure, I can do that. *(Reads)* "Signior Martino and his wife Velveeta and his daughters Pansy and Conformina; Count Anselme and his scintillating sisters Flagella and Flicka; Lady Pirini Scleroso, widow of Vetruvio; Signior Placentio and his breathtaking sisters Muffy and Peaches; Mercutio and his brother Valentine; my uncle Capulet, his wife, Gorga, and daughters Euglena and Euphorbia; my niece Rosaline; Livia; Signior Valentio and his cousin Tybalt; Lucio and the aggressive Helena; Spike Galtieri; Mildred Zontar; Bunny Tularemia; Cretina Burrito; Njinki Blogbadu; Vilo Bacillakis; and Balakankatharan Ramanathavuniyan." Sounds like an awesome party. Where's it happening?

*Servant:* At my master Capulet's house. You can drop in for a cup of wine, as long as you're not a Montague. Thank you. Goodbye. *(He leaves.)*

*Benvolio:* Rosaline will be there — the one you're so sick in love with. You should go. Have a look at the other women. You may see someone you like better.

*Romeo:* That could never happen. There's no one who can match her.

*Benvolio:* But you've never compared her with anyone else. You just see her in isolation. You go to the party and then make up your mind. I'll go with you. How's that?

*Romeo:* Okay, I'll go. But I don't think it'll make any difference.

*(They leave.)*

**Act 1, Scene 3.** *A room in the Capulet house. Lady Capulet and Juliet's Nurse come in.*

*Lady Capulet:* Where's Juliet? Call her, will you?

*Nurse:* Juliet!

*(Juliet comes in.)*

*Juliet:* Yes, mom?

*Lady Capulet:* Isn't she pretty? Not even fourteen.

*Nurse:* She'll be fourteen on Lammastide Eve. My, my! The prettiest baby I ever nursed. I want to live to see her married.

*Lady Capulet:* You're reading my mind.—Juliet, what do you think about getting married?

*Juliet:* I never thought of it.

*Lady Capulet:* Well, start thinking about it. There's a fine noble named Paris who wants to marry you.

*Nurse:* Now there's a hunk!

*Lady Capulet:* He's coming to the dinner party tonight. You'll get a look at him. He's very handsome, and he's got money. And he's related to the Prince. What do you say?

*Juliet:* If you want me to meet him, I'll meet him. Maybe I'll like him. Maybe I won't. I don't know.

(*A servant comes in.*)

*Servant:* Madam, the guests are arriving, and supper is being laid out.

*Lady Capulet:* Right. We're coming. (*Servant leaves.*) Juliet, Paris will be waiting to meet you.

*Nurse:* Go for it, girl! If I were a teenager again, I'd be all over that stud.

(*They leave.*)

**Act 1, Scene 4.** *On a street, Romeo, Mercutio, Benvolio, and a few others come in, wearing masks suitable for a masquerade ball.*

*Romeo:* What'll we say when we get there?

*Benvolio:* Don't worry about it. We'll just slip in while the party's in progress, dance with a few ladies, and be out of there.

*Romeo:* I'm not really up for this. I'm still depressed.

*Mercutio:* Aw, go on. This'll be good for you.

*Romeo:* I think it's a bad idea to go. I had a bad dream.

*Mercutio:* A dream! Huh! Don't take a dream seriously. It's just Queen Mab, the Celtic fairy queen, messing with your head. I once dreamed that an elephant was hitting me with its trunk because I wouldn't feed it. Another time I dreamed that my servants were zombies. And another time there was this big rabbit, and he made me follow him down this hole, and we ended up in this grotto with all these hot Norwegian babes with big tits. And then—

*Benvolio:* Will you shut up! We're going to be too late for dinner.

*Romeo:* I've still got this awful feeling hanging over me that something bad is going to come out of all this — like my own death. But you guys are determined to take me, aren't you? Okay, then, lead the way.

*Benvolio:* Hey, ho! On we go!

(They leave.)

**Act 1, Scene 5.** At Capulet's house, the Capulets are mixing with the guests. Musicians are playing, and people are dancing.

*Romeo (to a Servant):* Who is that lady over there?

*Servant:* I don't know which one you mean, sir.

*Romeo:* She's the most beautiful lady I've ever seen.

*Tybalt (Aside):* I know that voice. (He goes to Capulet and speaks to him discreetly.) Uncle, there's a Montague in the room. Over there — the one wearing the purple mask.

*Capulet:* Who is that? Romeo?

*Tybalt:* Yes. Let me get my sword, and I'll kill him.

*Capulet:* No, no, no. He's not doing any harm. He's behaving himself.

*Tybalt:* But he's a damned Montague. I won't tolerate him in this house.

*Capulet:* Hey, take it easy. This is my house. I say leave him alone. We're having a nice party here. Don't spoil it.

*Tybalt:* It's a deliberate insult to us that he's here. How can you allow it?

*Capulet:* Don't be a hothead. Just keep that temper of yours under control.

*Tybalt:* I'd better leave the room. Fuck him anyway.

(*Tybalt leaves. Romeo approaches Juliet.*)

*Romeo:* Oh, madam, I would kiss your hand. (He kisses her hand.)

*Juliet:* Oh, that's so quaint!

*Romeo:* Oh, madam, I would kiss your lips.

*Juliet:* Oh! But I—(*Romeo kisses her very gently on the lips.*) Oh...oh...that was so gentle.

(*Nurse comes over to Juliet.*)

*Nurse:* Madam, your mother wants to speak to you.

*Romeo:* And who is her mother?

*Nurse:* Her mother is the lady of the house, of course — Lady Capulet.

*Romeo:* This girl's a Capulet? Oh, God, I'm done for!

(*Benvolio approaches Romeo.*)

*Benvolio:* This would be a good time to bug out, bro.

*Romeo:* Yeah, I think you're right.

*Capulet:* Hey, fellows, you don't have to go. Stick around and have a snack.

*Benvolio:* Gee, thanks, my lord, but it's late for us. We've got to go. We had a good time, though.

*Capulet:* All right, then. Thanks for coming. Good night.

*(Everyone disperses except for Juliet and the Nurse.)*

*Juliet:* Who was that man — the one who kissed me?

*Nurse:* His name is Romeo. He's the son of Montague.

*Juliet (Sighing):* Romeo!...I love him.

*Nurse:* What? You would love a Montague?

*(Lady Capulet calls "Juliet" from within.)*

*Nurse:* Yes, we're coming, madam!

*(Nurse leads Juliet out.)*

**Act 2, Scene 1.** *Benvolio and Mercutio are outside at night, returning from Capulet's house.*

*Benvolio:* Hey, where did Romeo go? Did he go back?

*Mercutio:* He probably went home.

*Benvolio:* No, he didn't. I could swear I saw him go back.

*Mercutio:* Ha! Back to try his luck with Rosaline? Could be. Maybe he's thinking of finding her in the orchard and getting between her silky thighs. He's got Rosaline on the brain.

*Benvolio:* Oh, hell. I hope not.

*Mercutio:* He'll probably stand outside the house all night, freezing his ass hoping to see her.

*Benvolio:* Oh, well, forget about it. Let's go home.

*(They leave.)*

**Act 2, Scene 2.** *Romeo is in the orchard beside the house. A light appears above in Juliet's bedroom.*

*Romeo:* There's a light in her window. Maybe I'll see her naked....Oh, Juliet, baby doll, I want you so bad. I love you. I want to fuck you. I have such a hard-on. I would die for you. You're the sun, moon, and stars all put together. I can't live without you.

*Juliet (Speaking to herself, unaware of Romeo):* Oh, Romeo...Romeo...Why must you be a Montague? Why must I be a Capulet? I'd be all yours if it weren't for our names.

*Romeo (Louder, making himself heard):* I'll change my name for your sake, if that's what it takes for you to love me.

*Juliet (On the balcony):* Who's there?

*Romeo:* I won't speak my name if it stands between us.

*Juliet:* I know your voice. It's Romeo. Did you climb over the orchard wall just to see me? You could've broken your neck. And if any of my family catch you, they might kill you.

*Romeo:* I don't care. I love you. I would gladly die right here, right now, if I knew you loved me.

*Juliet:* You heard me say so before I knew you were down there. All right, then. But I don't want you to think I'm easy. You say you love me, but how do I know you really mean it?

*Romeo:* I swear it. I swear by the moon.

*Juliet:* The moon changes. Your love could change, too.

*Romeo:* What do you want me to swear on?

*Juliet:* Don't swear on anything. This is all too sudden for me. We both need time to think it over, don't you think? You should go now.

*Romeo:* Do you want me to leave unsatisfied?

*Juliet:* What kind of satisfaction do you expect me to give you tonight?

*Romeo:* Just tell me you love me.

*Juliet:* You already heard me say it.

*Romeo:* Are you taking it back now?

*Juliet:* No. I'd just rather wait and be sure of you. Then I can tell you again. (*Nurse is heard calling within.*) Wait a second. Don't go. (*Juliet leaves the balcony.*)

*Romeo:* Oh, God. Maybe I'm just dreaming all this. Maybe it's Queen Mab playing a trick on me.

(*Juliet returns to the balcony.*)

*Juliet:* If you really love me, I want to know tomorrow where and when you'll marry me. I'll send someone to you, and you'll give her your message, okay? And if you've changed your mind and don't want to marry me, then leave me alone and let me get over you.

*Nurse (Within):* Madam!

*Juliet:* Yes, I'm coming! (*Juliet leaves the balcony. Romeo begins to walk away. Then Juliet returns to the balcony. She speaks in a loud whisper.*) Romeo!...I can't raise my voice. What time tomorrow should I send someone to see you?

*Romeo:* Nine o'clock.

*Juliet:* I can hardly wait. I hate to say good night to you.

*Romeo:* I hate to leave you.

*Juliet:* We'll be here all night saying good night to each other. I have to go. (*She goes inside.*)

*Romeo:* I won't sleep a wink tonight.

(*He leaves.*)

**Act 2, Scene 3.** *Friar Laurence is puttering about in his garden, a basket in hand.*

*Friar Laurence:* Boy, I got a good crop of weed coming in. This is gonna make all the brothers very happy. It's like I always say. Everything that Mother Nature grows is good for something.

(*Romeo comes in.*)

*Romeo:* Good morning, Father.

*Friar Laurence:* Well, you're up early, aren't you? Or more likely, from the looks of your eyeballs, you never went to bed at all.

*Romeo:* You're right, Father. I was up all night. And it was wonderful.

*Friar Laurence:* Uh, oh! Don't tell me you spent the night having sex with Rosaline!

*Romeo:* Rosaline? Forget her. She's history.

*Friar Laurence:* That's probably for the best. So where were you?

*Romeo:* I was behind enemy lines, you might say. And now I'm wounded — by love, that is. And so is the enemy. So I've come to you for help.

*Friar Laurence:* What exactly do you mean?

*Romeo:* I'm talking about me and Juliet Capulet. We want to be married — today, if possible.

*Friar Laurence:* Holy shit! I don't believe it! For months you were eating your heart out over Rosaline. Now all of a sudden you want to marry Juliet?

*Romeo:* Look, Father, you criticized me enough over Rosaline, but don't criticize me now. Juliet is different. She loves me. Rosaline didn't.

*Friar Laurence:* I see. Okay, then. This could be a good thing. This could end the feud between your families.

*Romeo:* Let's do it now. I don't want to wait.

*Friar Laurence:* Yeah, yeah. Take it easy. You young people are too much in a hurry. Okay. Come on.

(*They leave.*)

**Act 2, Scene 4.** *Benvolio and Mercutio are on the street.*

*Mercutio:* Where was Romeo last night?

*Benvolio:* He wasn't home. That's all I know.

*Mercutio:* It's Rosaline's fault. That cold-hearted bitch won't give him a chance. She's driving him crazy.

*Benvolio:* I'll tell you something worse. Tybalt sent a letter to his house.

*Mercutio:* Oh, he did, did he? I can guess what that's about. It's a challenge to a duel.

*Benvolio:* Well, then, Romeo will duel him. He's not going to take any shit from Tybalt.

*Mercutio:* Tybalt will kill him.

*Benvolio:* How do you know?

*Mercutio:* Listen, Tybalt is the fucking Prince of Darkness with a sword. He could unbutton your shirt with his sword faster than you could unbutton it yourself. You don't want to mess with him.

*Benvolio:* Here comes Romeo now.

(*Romeo comes in.*)

*Mercutio:* Probably with a bad case of blue balls.—Hey, bro, you gave us the slip last night.

*Romeo:* Sorry about that, guys. I didn't mean to be rude. I had, uh, some pressing business, you might say.

*Mercutio:* Like pressing your dick between Rosaline's creamy thighs?

*Romeo:* No, no. Ha, ha.

*Mercutio:* Parking the big fire engine in her back alley, maybe?

*Romeo:* No, no. Come on.

*Mercutio:* I know what. You were giving her some French love, right? A good sucking for her virgin clit.

*Romeo:* No, no.—Oops! Watch your language.

(*Nurse and Peter come in.*)

*Nurse:* Good morning, gentlemen.

*Mercutio:* Good afternoon, madam.

*Nurse:* Oh! Is it afternoon already?

*Mercutio:* Of course. In fact, the bawdy hand of the clock is now upon the prick of noon.

*Peter:* What do you mean?

*Mercutio:* That was a joke.

*Peter:* I don't get it.

*Nurse:* I get it. (*To Mercutio*) You asshole. Now, I would have a private word with young lord Romeo, please.

*Mercutio (to Benvolio):* You see? The dude's already made a reputation for himself after last night. She's hot for him. (*To Romeo*) See you later at your place for dinner?

*Romeo:* Yeah, yeah. Later.

*Mercutio:* Have a good time. Heh! Heh!

(*Mercutio and Benvolio leave.*)

*Nurse:* That guy's an asshole. (*To Peter*) And you. You just stand there while someone talks dirty to me?

*Peter:* Sorry. I didn't understand anything that was said.

*Nurse (to Romeo):* Now, sir. My young lady sent me to find you. But I'll tell you right now on my own behalf that you'd better not have any bad intentions where she's concerned. Otherwise, you're not at all the gentleman she thinks you are.

*Romeo:* Please tell her to find some excuse to come to confession this afternoon. Friar Laurence will marry us in his cell at the abbey.

*Nurse:* She'll be there.

*Romeo:* And now I want you to wait behind the abbey wall. A friend of mine will bring you a rope ladder. I'm going to use it tonight. It's to, uh—

*Nurse:* Yes, I understand. By the way, you ought to know there's another fellow who wants to marry Juliet. It's Paris.

*Romeo:* Never mind about him. Just give Juliet my message.

*Nurse:* I will. She'll be very glad.

(*Romeo leaves.*)

*Nurse (to Peter):* Come on. Let's go.

(*They leave in another direction.*)

#### **Act 2, Scene 5. In Capulet's orchard. Juliet is pacing back and forth.**

*Juliet:* Where the hell is that nurse? She's been gone since nine o'clock this morning. This waiting is killing me. (*The Nurse and Peter come in.*) Finally! Nurse, did you see Romeo? Please, I want to speak in private.

*Nurse (to Peter):* Go take a walk. (*Peter leaves.*)

*Juliet:* Well? Tell me the news! Why are you frowning?

*Nurse:* Oh, give me a minute to rest. Oh, my poor feet. They're so sore. And my bones are aching.

*Juliet:* Yes, I'm sorry. But what's the news? What did he say?

*Nurse:* Well! I don't know about this Romeo of yours. He's a good-looking fellow, I'll grant you that. But I can't say much about his choice of friends. One of them was quite vulgar, in my opinion.

*Juliet:* Never mind that. What about the marriage? Is he marrying me or not?

*Nurse:* Oh, what a headache I have! And my back! You shouldn't send an old person like me on such a long errand.

*Juliet:* Yes, I'm sorry. But tell me about Romeo! What did he say?

*Nurse:* He's a nice fellow, in my opinion. He seems honest and kind.

*Juliet:* Yes, yes, I know that! But what did he say?

*Nurse:* My goodness, you are impatient. Well, can you go to confession today?

*Juliet:* Yes.

*Nurse:* Then you are to go to Friar Laurence's cell and meet your Romeo there and be married. I will bring you a rope ladder so your Romeo can climb up to your room tonight. Oh, the things I do to make you happy! Now, you get going.

*Juliet:* Yes! Thank you, Nurse!

(*Juliet leaves.*)

#### **Act 2, Scene 6. Friar Laurence's cell. Friar Laurence and Romeo come in.**

*Friar Laurence:* Teenage marriage is always high-risk. I hope this works out.

*Romeo:* As long as I can marry her now, I don't care what happens later.

*Friar Laurence:* Well, I'm on your side anyway. Ah, here comes the young lady now.

(*Juliet comes in.*)

*Romeo:* Juliet! I can't tell you how happy I am! I'm floating! I'm hearing violins!

*Juliet:* Me, too! Double!

*Friar Laurence:* Right. Let's get it over with, shall we? Follow me.

(*They leave.*)

#### **Act 3, Scene 1. Mercutio, Benvolio, and a few servants are on the street.**

*Benvolio:* Boy, what a heat wave!

*Mercutio:* It's not the heat, it's the humidity.

*Benvolio:* This sort of heat brings out the worst in people. Have you ever noticed how there's more violence on hot days?

*Mercutio:* You're one to talk. You've got a hair-trigger like nobody else. You once punched a guy because he made fun of your hat. And that wasn't even in the summer.

*Benvolio:* Aah, you're just the same, if not worse. You once got into a fight with a chef over a pizza.

*Mercutio:* You don't sprinkle grated parmesan cheese on top of a finished pizza. Only fools do that.

*Benvolio:* Uh, oh. I think I see trouble coming.

*(Tybalt and others come in.)*

*Tybalt:* I want a word with you guys.

*Mercutio:* What's your problem, dude?

*Romeo:* You're Romeo's friends, aren't you?

*Mercutio:* Yeah, so what?

*Tybalt:* I saw him in Capulet's house last evening, that's what.

*Benvolio (to Mercutio):* Hey, we're in a public place. You want to take this dispute indoors?

*Mercutio:* No way.

*(Romeo comes in.)*

*Tybalt:* Never mind. Here's the guy I want.—Hey, Romeo. You're a fucking creep.

*Romeo:* I'm not going to lose my temper with you, Tybalt. I don't want a fight, so just go away.

*Tybalt:* Draw your sword, you Montague bastard! My uncle might overlook your insult, but I won't!

*Romeo:* I never did anything to you. And I don't have anything against you or any Capulet, for that matter.

*Mercutio:* Hey, Rom, are you wimping out? I can't believe it! *(Draws his sword. To Tybalt)* Okay, you rat-fucker. You obviously came here for a fight.

*Tybalt:* You want a piece of me?

*Mercutio:* Not just a piece. I want all of you.

*Tybalt:* Suits me fine, asshole. *(Draws his sword.)*

*Romeo:* No, Merc! Don't fight him!

*Mercutio:* Come on, bring it, you fucker!

*(Mercutio and Tybalt start to duel.)*

*Romeo: Stop, you guys! The Prince has forbidden dueling! (Romeo gets between Tybalt and Mercutio and inadvertently blocks Mercutio's line of sight. Tybalt stabs Mercutio and then flees with his companions.)*

*Mercutio:* Oh, fuck me! He got me! Oh, God!

*Benvolio:* How bad is it?

*Mercutio:* Bad enough. Somebody get a doctor. (*A servant leaves.*)

*Romeo:* Hold on. You'll be okay.

*Mercutio:* No, I won't. I'm dead. Damn it. Why did you jump in front of me? You blocked my sight.

*Romeo:* I didn't mean to. I was only trying to help.

*Mercutio:* Ugh...Damn Montagues and Capulets....If it wasn't for your damn feuding....Look who gets killed — me....Ben, get me indoors somewhere.

(*Benvolio helps Mercutio as both leave.*)

*Romeo:* Poor Mercutio. That should've been me. But I couldn't fight Tybalt. He doesn't know that I married Juliet and he's family now. Nobody knows except Friar Laurence and the nurse. Now my friends will all think I'm a coward.

(*Benvolio returns.*)

*Benvolio:* He's dead.

*Romeo:* Oh, fucking hell! I can't leave it like this. (*Tybalt returns.*) You bastard! You killed him! Now I'm going to kill you!

(*They duel. Romeo kills Tybalt.*)

*Benvolio:* You better get the fuck out of here! If the Prince's men catch you, you'll be sentenced to death!

*Romeo:* What was I supposed to do?

*Benvolio:* This is no time for a debate! Get your ass out of here!

(*Romeo flees. Then citizens arrive, shouting "Murder!" Then the Prince arrives with his attendants, as well as Montague, Capulet, their wives, and others.*)

*Prince:* What happened here? Who did this?

*Benvolio:* Prince, I saw the whole thing. Tybalt came looking for a fight with Romeo, but Romeo tried to make peace with him. Then Mercutio got into a duel with Tybalt, and when Romeo got between them to stop it, Tybalt stabbed Mercutio and killed him. Then Tybalt ran, but a minute later he came back, and then Romeo fought him and killed him.

*Lady Capulet:* Tybalt was my nephew. Prince, you have to punish Romeo for this.

*Prince:* Romeo killed Tybalt, but Tybalt killed Mercutio. And Mercutio was my kinsman. So who's guilty now?

*Montague:* Not Romeo, Prince. He was Mercutio's friend. Tybalt started the whole thing, and you would've punished him for starting a duel.

*Prince:* I can't excuse Romeo. I issued a decree, and if I start making exceptions, we'll be right back where we started, and there will never be any real peace in Verona. The only clemency I will grant to him is that he is to be banished from Verona. Let him go to Mantua. But if he comes back without my permission, he'll be executed. As for you, Montague, you're going to pay a big fine. Mercutio is dead because of your constant feuding with the Capulets. Now let's get this body off the street.

*(Tybalt's body is borne off as everyone leaves.)*

**Act 3, Scene 2. Capulet's orchard. Juliet comes in.**

*Juliet:* This is the longest day of my life. If only night would come and bring my Romeo to me. (*The Nurse come in, carrying the rope ladder.*) Nurse, what's the news? Is this the rope ladder for Romeo?

*Nurse:* I don't think you'll have any use for this after all.

*Juliet:* Why? What's happened?

*Nurse:* Oh, God. Everything's gone wrong. The poor man's dead.

*Juliet:* Who's dead?

*Nurse:* I saw the body. Stabbed in the chest, he was. All covered in blood.

*Juliet:* Romeo? If Romeo's dead, let me die, too, and bury me with him!

*Nurse:* My good friend Tybalt. Such a fine gentleman. Oh, that I should see him dead with my own eyes.

*Juliet:* What? Are they both dead — my cousin and Romeo?

*Nurse:* No, madam. Tybalt is dead. Romeo killed him, and he's been banished.

*Juliet:* Romeo killed my cousin Tybalt?

*Nurse:* That he did. It's so terrible.

*Juliet:* My Romeo? The man I thought was such an angel? Is he really a murderer? Could I have been so wrong about him?

*Nurse:* All men are liars. You can't believe in any of them. To hell with Romeo!

*Juliet:* Bite your tongue! He no more belongs in hell than I do!

*Nurse:* Would you defend the man who killed your cousin?

*Juliet:* Defend my husband? Of course! I have to! There must be an explanation. Tybalt must have tried to kill him first. And now Romeo is banished. That's worse than anything. I'll never see him again. Nurse, where are my parents?

*Nurse:* They're crying their hearts out over Tybalt's body right now. You should be with them.

*Juliet:* No. Let them shed their tears for Tybalt. I'll shed mine for Romeo. Let me take these ropes to my room. My Romeo would have been with me tonight. Instead, I'll be a virgin till I'm dead.

*Nurse:* Go wait in your room. I know where he's hiding. He's in Friar Laurence's cell. I'll try to bring him to you tonight.

*Juliet:* Oh, you must! Please, you must! Let me see him one more time. And give him this ring from me.

**Act 3, Scene 3.** *In Friar Laurence's cell. Friar Laurence comes in.*

*Friar Laurence:* It's me, kid. Come on out.

*(Romeo appears from a place of concealment.)*

*Romeo:* What's happening out there, Father?

*Friar Laurence:* You've been banished by the Prince. Count yourself lucky. He could have ordered you executed outright.

*Romeo:* I'd rather die than be separated from Juliet.

*Friar Laurence:* I wish you'd think with your brain for a change, instead of acting out of emotion. There is a world outside of Verona, you know. You go to Mantua and bide your time. Get some stability back in your life.

*Romeo:* My life is shit without Juliet! *(He falls to the floor, weeping.)*

*Friar Laurence:* Don't talk like a child. *(Knocking is heard at the door.)* Quick! Hide!

*Romeo:* I don't care any more. Let them find me.

*(More knocking at the door.)*

*Friar Laurence:* Yes! Coming! Who is it?

*Nurse (From outside):* I come from Lady Juliet.

*Friar Laurence (Opening door):* All right. Come in.

*Nurse:* Where's Romeo?

*Friar Laurence (Pointing):* He's that puddle on the floor.

*Nurse:* My goodness. Just like Juliet.

*Romeo (Getting up):* How is she? Does she still want me? Does she think I'm a murderer?

*Nurse:* All she does is cry, cry, cry. She cries over Tybalt, and she cries over you.

*Romeo:* I've ruined her life. I should die now. (*Starts to draw his dagger but is stopped by Friar Laurence.*)

*Friar Laurence:* Put that away, for Christ's sake. Can't you pull yourself together and act like a man? This is no time for hysteria. Listen, my boy, you're luckier than you realize. You could've been killed by Tybalt, but you're alive. You could've gotten a death sentence, but you're only banished. And you still have Juliet. Now you listen to me. You go to Juliet. But don't stay there too late or you'll run into the guards on the night watch. Then you go to Mantua and wait until we can figure out the best way and the best time to announce your marriage publicly. Then maybe we can persuade the Prince to pardon you and let you come back.—*Nurse,* tell your lady to try to get everyone else in the house to go to bed early.

*Nurse:* I will. This is good news.—My lord, your Juliet told me to give you this ring. She's waiting to see you. (*Nurse leaves.*)

*Romeo:* I'm starting to feel better.

*Friar Laurence:* Remember, don't stay too late. I'll send word to you in Mantua by one of your servants whenever I have news for you.

*Romeo:* Thanks. Goodbye.

(*Romeo leaves.*)

#### **Act 3, Scene 4. A room in Capulet's house. Capulet, Lady Capulet, and Paris come in.**

*Capulet:* There's been so much shit happening that we haven't had time to talk this over with Juliet. She's grieving over her poor cousin Tybalt. And I should have been in bed an hour ago.

*Paris:* I understand. This isn't the right time to talk to her about marriage. Just give her my kind regards.

*Lady Capulet:* We will.

*Capulet:* My mind's made up. I want the girl to marry you. She'll do what I want, I'm sure.—Wife, you have a word with her before you go to bed. Explain to her that Paris is ready to marry her. We'll do it on Wednesday. What's today?

*Paris:* Monday.

*Capulet:* Then Wednesday's too soon. We'll make it Thursday. Is that okay? After all, with Tybalt just recently...you know. We shouldn't celebrate too much. It'll be a quiet little wedding. Just a few friends.

*Paris:* Thursday is fine with me. I can hardly wait.

*Capulet:* Good. Then it's Thursday.—Wife, you'll tell Juliet.—It's late. Good night, Paris.

*Paris:* Good night, my lord.

(*Paris leaves.*)

**Act 3, Scene 5.** *In Juliet's bedroom. Juliet is with Romeo.*

*Juliet* (*Very weepy*): I wish you didn't have to go.

*Romeo:* I'll stay here and die if you want me to.

*Juliet:* No. You have to go so you can live.

*Romeo:* One last kiss. (*They kiss.*)

*Juliet:* Will I ever see you again?

*Romeo:* Sure. Everything will work out okay.

*Juliet:* Try to send word to me from Mantua.

*Romeo:* I will if I can.

(*The Nurse knocks at the door and pokes her head in.*)

*Nurse:* Your mother's coming to speak to you. (*Nurse leaves.*)

*Juliet:* Hurry!

(*They go out to the balcony, and Juliet watches as Romeo disappears down the rope ladder.*)

*Juliet:* He looks so pale in the moonlight — almost like a dead man.

(*Lady Capulet knocks, and Juliet quickly shuts the balcony door in time to face her mother walking in.*)

*Lady Capulet:* Still up, Juliet? What's the matter?

*Juliet:* I don't feel well.

*Lady Capulet:* You've been crying. Over Tybalt. You can't grieve for your cousin forever.

*Juliet:* Let me cry for what I have lost.

*Lady Capulet:* Better that you should cry than his murderer still lives.

*Juliet:* Murderer?

*Lady Capulet:* That villain Romeo.

*Juliet:* Yes, of course. I wish that no one else but I should be the one to avenge Tybalt's death.

*Lady Capulet:* Romeo will get what's coming to him. You can be sure of that. I have friends in Mantua. I could have him killed. Then you could stop grieving for Tybalt.

*Juliet:* No. If Romeo dies, I must see him with my own eyes.

*Lady Capulet:* Well, in any case, I have some good news for you.

*Juliet:* What's that?

*Lady Capulet:* Your kind, caring, wonderful father, who thinks only of your best interests, has arranged something for you. On Thursday you're going to marry Count Paris at Saint Peter's Church.

*Juliet:* What? Marry Paris? Just like that? Oh, no! I'm not going to be forced into any marriage with Paris! I swear to you, I'll marry Romeo before I marry Paris!

*Lady Capulet:* That's a ridiculous thing to say. Paris is related to the Prince, and he's crazy about you. Oh, I don't think your father is going to like this.

*(Capulet and the Nurse come in.)*

*Capulet:* Still crying, girl? My goodness! Well, wife, did you tell her?

*Lady Capulet:* She refuses to marry Paris.

*Capulet:* What? Is she crazy? Paris is the finest bachelor in Verona! Daughter, you should be grateful!

*Juliet:* Thanks but no thanks! Nobody tells me who to love — or who to hate!

*Capulet:* You spoiled brat! Now you listen to me! Thursday morning you're going to marry Paris at Saint Peter's Church if I have to drag you there kicking and screaming!

*Lady Capulet (to Capulet):* Please! My dear!

*Juliet:* Would you please listen to me for one minute?

*Capulet:* Damn you, you ungrateful kid! I'm your father, and you'll do what I say! I should give you such a smack in the face right now!—Wife, we've raised a bad kid! She's a curse to us, not a blessing!

*Nurse:* No! Don't say that, sir! She's a good girl!

*Capulet:* Oh, shut up! Nobody asked for your opinion!

*Lady Capulet:* Oh, my dear, please don't lose your temper.

*Capulet:* Jesus Christ! It pisses me off! Every day, every hour, every minute, all I think about is making a good marriage for my daughter! And when I find her the best gentleman in town — a man any woman in her right mind would be thrilled to marry — she doesn't want him! Well, if you don't want to get married, young lady, fine with me! But out you go! Go out in the world and make your own way! It's your choice! If you want to be my daughter, you'll marry Paris! Otherwise, you're on your own, and you won't get a penny from me! You can join the homeless and beg on the street! *(He leaves.)*

*Juliet:* Doesn't anybody understand? Doesn't anybody care how I feel? Mom, you can't let him throw me out! At least make him put off the marriage for a month. Otherwise...you might as well have a grave dug for me.

*Lady Capulet:* Don't look to me for any help. Your father's the boss. And he happens to be right. If you insist on being stubborn, I'm through with you.

(*She leaves.*)

*Juliet:* Nurse, what should I do? How can I stop this? Tell me!

*Nurse:* Well, now, it seems to me that things have changed, haven't they? Your Romeo is out of the picture. He's banished. How can he come back? He can't without being put to death. So you really don't have a husband. Now, on the other hand, there's Paris. He's quite a catch, if you want my opinion — way better than Romeo. You'd be a lot happier with Paris. You should marry him. Romeo might as well be dead.

*Juliet:* You really mean that?

*Nurse:* Of course.

*Juliet:* Thank you. You've been a big help. Please tell my mother that since I've made my father so angry, I'm going to see Friar Laurence the first thing in the morning to make confession and to be absolved.

*Nurse:* Well, now, that's more like it. Your parents will be very happy to hear that. (*She leaves.*)

*Juliet:* What a hypocrite! First she's all in favor of Romeo. Then I should forget about him and marry Paris. I'm through with her. Friar Laurence is my last hope. If he can't help me, I might as well kill myself.

**Act 4, Scene 1.** *In Friar Laurence's cell. Friar Laurence and Paris come in.*

*Friar Laurence:* So you want to get married on Thursday, do you? That's pretty sudden.

*Paris:* That's what the old man wants, and that's what I want, too.

*Friar Laurence:* But you haven't heard what the girl wants. Doesn't that matter?

*Paris:* Well, I haven't had the chance to talk to her myself, because all she does is cry over her cousin Tybalt. But her father thinks it's best if she gets married at once to snap her out of her grief.

*Friar Laurence (Aside):* How did I ever get mixed up in such a mess?—Oh, here comes the young lady now.

(*Juliet comes in.*)

*Paris:* What a happy coincidence! My future wife!

*Juliet:* We'll see about that.

*Paris:* If you've come to confess to Friar Laurence, don't deny to him that you love me.

*Juliet:* My confessions are my own affair.

*Paris:* Poor girl. I can see you've been crying.

*Juliet:* Yes. Quite so.—Father, do you have time for me now, or should I come back later?

*Friar Laurence:* No, no, stay.—My lord, if you don't mind.

*Paris:* Not at all. I leave you both to your privacy.—*Juliet*, until Thursday, my dear. (*He leaves.*)

*Juliet:* Oh, Father, I don't know what to do! I've lost all hope!

*Friar Laurence:* Indeed. Paris told me the two of you are to be married on Thursday.

*Juliet:* Get me out of this somehow. Think of something. (*Shows knife.*) Otherwise, this is my only way out.

*Friar Laurence:* No, no, don't even think of that. I may be able to help you. I have an idea. It's pretty drastic, however. You'll need nerves of steel and some good luck to pull it off.

*Juliet:* I'll do anything. I'll walk on hot coals. I'll wade through a swamp full of alligators. Whatever it takes. As long as it gets me back together with Romeo.

*Friar Laurence:* All right, then. Here's the plan. You go home and say you'll agree to marry Paris. (*He goes to a cabinet and retrieves a vial.*) Tomorrow night, which is Wednesday night, make sure you're alone in your bedroom. You must drink what's in this vial. It contains a plant extract. It will make you appear dead for forty-two hours. On Thursday morning, when they find you, they'll think you're dead. Then they'll inter you in the family vault in the cemetery. In the meantime, I'll send word to Romeo and explain what we've done. He'll come to the vault, and I'll meet him there shortly before you wake up. As soon as you wake up, he'll take you away to Mantua. What do you think? Are you willing to try it?

*Juliet:* I'll do it. Give me the vial.

*Friar Laurence:* Good. Here. Just follow my instructions and don't lose your courage. I'll get one of the brothers to deliver a letter to Romeo in Mantua.

*Juliet:* Thank you, Father!

(*She leaves.*)

#### **Act 4, Scene 2. In Capulet's house. Capulet, Lady Capulet, and the Nurse.**

*Capulet:* So Juliet went to see Friar Laurence, did she?

*Nurse:* Yes. For confession.

*Capulet:* Well, let's hope he was able to talk some sense into her.

*Nurse:* Here she comes now. She looks a lot calmer.

(*Juliet comes in.*)

*Capulet:* Well, now, girl. What do you have to say to me?

*Juliet:* I talked it over with Friar Laurence, and now I understand that I was wrong. I'm sorry I was disobedient. I'll do whatever you say.

*Capulet:* Thank God for that! I can't wait to tell Paris. I'll send word to him.

*Juliet:* You don't have to. I bumped into him at Friar Laurence's cell.

*Capulet:* Splendid! Well! Everything's working out perfectly, heh, heh! In fact, why wait till Thursday? Let's tell Paris the wedding is on for tomorrow.

*Juliet:* Oh! But my clothes aren't ready.

*Lady Capulet:* I haven't shopped. We need food.

*Capulet:* Minor details. Don't worry about it. I think I'll walk over to see Paris right now. Oh, I feel so relieved!

(He leaves.)

**Act 4, Scene 3.** *In Juliet's room. Juliet and the Nurse are selecting clothes.*

*Juliet:* I know what I'm going to wear. You can leave me now. I want to be by myself.

(*Lady Capulet comes in.*)

*Lady Capulet:* Do you need any help?

*Juliet:* No, mom. I want to be alone now.

*Lady Capulet:* All right. Good night. Try to get some sleep.

(*Lady Capulet and the Nurse leave.*)

*Juliet* (*Taking the vial from a place of concealment*): What if it doesn't work? What if it's poison? What if I suffocate in the vault before Romeo gets there? What if I wake up in darkness and don't remember where I am? What if Tybalt's ghost is waiting to kill me?...I feel so alone....Never mind. There's no other way....Romeo....Romeo (*She drinks the vial and falls upon her bed, within the bedcurtains.*)

**Act 4, Scene 4.** *This scene is deleted.*

**Act 4, Scene 5.** *Juliet's room. The Nurse comes in.*

*Nurse:* Mistress Juliet, wake up! Come on! Time to get up! (*Parts the bedcurtains.*) Still asleep? And in your clothes? My goodness! Come on, lady, get up! (*Shakes Juliet, then feels her neck, face, and hands.*) What's this? Oh, my God! She's dead! Help! Help!

(*Lady Capulet comes in.*)

*Lady Capulet:* What's the matter?

*Nurse:* She won't wake up!

*Juliet:* Wake up, Juliet! Wake up! (*Shaking her*) Help!

(*Capulet comes in.*)

*Capulet:* What's wrong? Paris just arrived.

*Lady Capulet and Nurse:* She's dead!

*Capulet:* What? It can't be! (*Examines Juliet.*) There's no sign of life....She is dead.

(*Friar Laurence and Paris come in.*)

*Friar Laurence:* We're waiting for the bride.

*Capulet:* She'll never live to be a bride. (*To Paris*) You would have been my son-in-law today. Our poor girl is dead.

*Paris:* Dead? Dead? On our wedding day? Why? Why?

*Lady Capulet:* This is the worst day of my life. Why, God? Why?

*Nurse:* It's the most terrible thing I've ever seen.

*Capulet:* My poor girl. So young. Now my life is destroyed.

*Friar Laurence:* The girl is in Heaven now. All your tears won't bring her back, so let her be. We'll take her to the church for the funeral. Let's all try to be dignified about it.

**Act 5, Scene 1.** *A street in Mantua. Romeo is there when his servant, Balthasar, arrives.*

*Balthasar (Out of breath):* My lord!

*Romeo:* Do you have any news for me? Anything from Friar Laurence? Anything about Juliet?

*Balthasar:* I have some bad news. Juliet is dead. I saw her carried to the family vault. I came on foot as quick as I could.

*Romeo:* No! It can't be! I'm going back there at once!

*Balthasar:* No, you mustn't! You know what will happen to you if you go back!

*Romeo:* To hell with it! Don't you have any word at all from Friar Laurence?

*Balthasar:* No. Nothing. But I heard that Juliet was supposed to marry Count Paris the very day she died.

*Romeo:* Hire two horses at one. We have to go back. (*Balthasar leaves.*) Juliet...I'll be with you tonight, no matter what. If you really are dead, I'll die beside you....I know a chemist here in town. I can get poison from him. His shop won't be open today, but he lives on this street....This is his house....Chemist! Chemist! Come out! You're wanted!

(*The Chemist comes out of a doorway. He's old and ragged.*)

*Chemist:* What do you want, sir? My shop is closed today. It's a holiday.

*Romeo:* I know that. Listen, I have forty ducats for you if you can provide me with something. You look like you could use the money.

*Chemist:* Forty ducats! My goodness! What is it you want?

*Romeo:* I want a poison. Something fast-acting and deadly.

*Chemist:* Oh, my! I could get in a lot of trouble selling you something like that.

*Romeo:* Nobody will know. Forty ducats, man!

*Chemist:* Wait here. Don't go away. (*Chemist goes into his house, and after a few moments he returns with a small package, such as a pouch or envelope.*) Just dissolve this powder in any liquid. It works immediately.

*Romeo:* Good. Here's your money. Buy yourself a new suit. (*Chemist leaves.*) And now I go to Juliet's grave.

(*He leaves.*)

**Act 5, Scene 2.** *Friar Laurence is in his cell when Friar John opens the door.*

*Friar John:* Friar Laurence! Oh, I'm glad you're here!

*Friar Laurence:* Friar John! Are you back from Mantua already? What did Romeo Say? Did he write me a letter?

*Friar John:* I never made it to Mantua. I went to get another brother to go with me. He was visiting a sick man, and when we were coming out of the house we ran into the public health officers, and they thought we might be infected with the plague, so they made us go back in the house.

*Friar Laurence:* What about my letter to Romeo?

*Friar John:* I couldn't get anyone to take it to him, and I couldn't get anyone to bring it back to you because they were afraid it might be contaminated with plague. Here it is.

*Friar Laurence:* Oh, my God! I'm fucked! Romeo needed to get this letter! Oh, bloody hell! Listen. John. Go get me a crowbar. Bring it back here at once.

*Friar John:* Okay, I can get one. (*He leaves.*)

*Friar Laurence:* What a fucking mess! Juliet will wake up in three hours. If Romeo isn't there, it'll be my fault. Maybe I can still get word to him. But right now I have to get her out of that vault and bring her here.

(*He leaves.*)

**Act 5, Scene 3.** *Outside the Capulet family vault in the cemetery at night. Paris and his Page come in, carrying flowers and a torch.*

*Paris:* I don't want anyone to see us. Put out the torch and give it to me. I want you to lie under those trees and keep your ear to the ground. If you hear footsteps, whistle to me as a signal.

*Page:* This place gives me the creeps. (*He retires.*)

*Paris:* My poor Juliet. These flowers should have gone on your bridal bed. Now they go on your grave. (*The Page whistles.*) Somebody's coming. I see a torch. (*Paris hides himself. Then Romeo and Balthasar come in, carrying a torch and tools.*)

*Romeo:* Give me the pick and crowbar. Now, take this letter. First thing in the morning, you're to deliver it to my father. Whatever happens here tonight, you know nothing. Understand? I want to see Juliet's face one last time, and I want to take the ring from her finger. Now, get going, and don't come back to spy on me or I'll break your neck.

*Balthasar:* I won't. I promise.

*Romeo:* You've served me well. Have a good life and be happy. Goodbye.

*Balthasar (Aside):* I don't like the sound of that. I'd better just hide myself and keep an eye on him. (*He retires and hides himself.*)

*Romeo:* Death, make room for one more. (*He opens the vault with the tools.*)

*Paris (Aside):* I know who that is. It's that devil Romeo who murdered Juliet's cousin. That's why she died — from grief. And now he's going to defile their bodies. (*He steps forward.*) Stop right there, you damned criminal! I'm arresting you, and you're going to be executed!

*Romeo:* Don't interfere in something you don't understand! Get out of here! I don't want to hurt you!

*Paris:* You're coming with me!

*Romeo:* I warned you!

(*They fight.*)

*Page:* Oh, shit! I gotta get help! (*He flees.*)

*Paris:* Oh!...I'm dead....Put me...next to...Juliet (*He dies.*)

*Romeo:* Who is this guy?...Oh, Christ! This is Paris. This is the guy Juliet was supposed to marry....Paris, you poor son of a bitch. (*He lays Paris in the tomb, near Juliet.*) Juliet. You look just as beautiful as when you were alive. Death hasn't changed you at all. I'll never leave you again. I'll be by your side forever. One last kiss. (*He kisses her.*) And now I'll end it all. I won't have to suffer any more. (*He drinks the poison.*) Oh...oh...(*He dies. Then Friar Laurence arrives from the other end of the cemetery, carrying a lantern and a crowbar. He encounters the concealed Balthasar.*)

*Friar Laurence:* Who are you?

*Balthasar:* It's Balthasar, the servant of Romeo. I know you, Father.

*Friar Laurence:* Thank God! You scared me! I see a light in the Capulet vault.

*Balthasar:* Romeo's in there.

*Friar Laurence:* How long has he been in there?

*Balthasar:* Too long. I'm worried.

*Friar Laurence:* Come with me. Please.

*Balthasar:* No, I can't. I'm not supposed to be here. He'll kill me if he thinks I stayed to spy on him.

*Friar Laurence:* All right, I'll go in by myself. I've got a bad feeling.

*Balthasar:* I thought I heard fighting before, but I may have been dreaming. I dreamed Romeo killed someone.

*Friar Laurence:* That's all we need. (*He goes to the entrance of the vault.*) Uh, oh. I see blood. (*He enters the vault.*) Romeo!...Paris!...They're both dead!...Juliet...she's waking up.

(*Juliet awakes.*)

*Juliet:* Oh!...Friar Laurence! Where's Romeo?

(*Distant footsteps and voices are heard — Paris's Page returning with help.*)

*Friar Laurence:* Somebody's coming! We've got to get out of here! I'm sorry, Juliet. Something went wrong. Romeo and Paris are both dead. I've got to get you out of here. I can hide you with some nuns. Please! Don't ask questions. There's no time to explain. I'll be in a lot of trouble if they find me here.

*Juliet:* Then go, Father. I'm not going anywhere. (*Friar Laurence flees.*) Romeo?...What's this cup? He drank poison? He should have left some for me....Perhaps there's some on his lips. (*She kisses him.*) Your lips are still warm. (*The Watchmen and Page and heard outside. "Which way?" "Over here!"*) Come to rescue me? No, thank you. (*She takes Romeo's dagger.*) Ah, Romeo....(*She stabs herself and falls upon his body and dies. Then the Watchmen and Page arrive.*)

*Page:* This is the place! The Capulet vault!

*First Watchman:* Look at all this blood! Search the grounds and arrest anyone you find! (*Some Watchmen leave.*) Oh, this is bad. We've got bodies here. Juliet's dead, but she's still warm. Go tell the Prince. And go to the Montagues and the Capulets and get them over here. I'm not sure what to make of this. (*Others leave. Second Watchman returns with Balthasar.*)

*Second Watchman:* Here's Romeo's servant. He was hiding in the churchyard.

(*Third Watchman returns with Friar Laurence.*)

*Third Watchman:* I caught this guy trying to leave. He had a crowbar. Looks like a break-and-enter.

(*The Prince arrives with his attendants.*)

*Prince:* What's the idea of waking me up in the middle of the night?

*(The Capulets arrive, with others.)*

*Capulet:* What's all the yelling about?

*Lady Capulet:* People in the street are yelling something about Romeo and Juliet and Paris, and everyone's running to the cemetery.

*First Watchman:* Prince, Count Paris is dead. And Romeo is dead. And Juliet is dead, too, but her body is still warm — as if she only just died.

*Prince:* This is murder!

*First Watchman:* We caught the Friar and Romeo's servant with burglary tools. It look like they broke into the vault.

*Capulet:* Wife, look there! Juliet's been stabbed with Romeo's dagger!

*Lady Capulet:* Oh! I'm ready to die!

*(Montague arrives, with others.)*

*Prince:* Where's your wife, Montague?

*Montague:* She died tonight, my lord. The grief of Romeo's exile was too much for her.

*Prince:* Look there. There's your boy.

*Montague:* Romeo! You foolish boy! What have you done?

*Prince:* We don't know what happened here. But we found Friar Laurence trying to leave.—You'd better tell us everything, Father.

*Friar Laurence:* I feel responsible for all this. But believe me, I was only trying to do good. I married Romeo and Juliet secretly. That same day Romeo killed Tybalt in a duel. Juliet wasn't grieving for Tybalt. She was grieving over Romeo being banished. When Capulet arranged a marriage for Juliet with Paris, she came to me for help. I gave her a potion that would make her appear dead for forty-two hours. My plan was to send word to Romeo in Mantua and have him meet me at the Capulet vault just before Juliet woke up. But he never got the letter. So I came here myself to make sure she didn't wake up alone. I intended to hide her in my cell until I could get word to Romeo. But when I arrived, I found Romeo and Paris both dead, and Juliet was just waking up. She wouldn't leave with me. It's obvious now that she killed herself. Her nurse will verify what I said about the secret marriage. I'm sorry that everything ended so badly. I'll take whatever punishment you think I deserve.

*Prince:* Now I want to hear from Balthasar.

*Balthasar:* I went to Mantua to tell Romeo that Juliet had died, which was true as far as I knew. We came back here immediately. He gave me this letter for his father and told me to leave.

*Prince:* I'll take that letter. Where's Paris's Page?—What was your master doing here?

*Page*: He came to put flowers on Juliet's grave. Then he told me to keep a lookout, so I did. Then this other fellow came with a light and tried to open the vault, and my master tried to stop him. There was a fight, and I ran for help.

*Prince (Scanning letter)*: This letter confirms what Friar Laurence said. Romeo writes that he bought poison and came back to die beside Juliet. Now it's all clear. Romeo didn't know that Juliet was still alive, and he killed himself because he couldn't bear to live without her. And then she killed herself because she couldn't bear to live without him. Well! Capulet. Montague. Do you see what your feuding has led to? You've both lost your children. And I've lost family as well, because I tolerated your feuding as long as I did. So now we are all paying the price, aren't we?

*Capulet*: Montague, for whatever it's worth, I'm glad my daughter married your son.

*Montague*: I will have a statue made for Juliet — the most beautiful statue Verona has ever seen.

*Capulet*: And I'll do the same for Romeo.

*Prince*: It looks like a cloudy morning. The sun doesn't want to come out today. The better to leave us to ourselves to reflect on our mistakes, and to decide who shall be punished and who shall be forgiven.

**END**

Posted on October 1, 2010 by Crad Kildney, Toronto, Canada.

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